America and ASEAN countries. According to industry estimates the revenues from export of bio-products and services during 2002 were about US $ 60 million.

Losses to gems and jewellery industries of Jaipur

2708. SHRI AIMADUDDIN AHMAD KHAN (DURRU): Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the extent of losses suffered by the gems and jewellery industries of Jaipur, due to slow exports to the countries affected by the Gulf war and thereafter to those countries which remained cut off due to SARS epidemic;

(b) whether there has been substantially low demands of Indian gems and jewellery articles in the European countries, U.S.A. and Japan;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the details of the incentives Government propose to offer to pull the gems and jewellery industries of Jaipur from the present state of recession?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI CHENNAMANENI VIDYASAGAR RAO): (a) As per the information made available by Gem & Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC), Mumbai, an autonomous and representative body of the trade sponsored by Ministry of Commerce & Industry, prime industry in Jaipur in the Gem & Jewellery sector is the processing of coloured gemstones. There has been a decline of 22% in the export of coloured gemstones during the first quarter (April to June) of the current financial year 2003-04 including from Jaipur. The major markets for coloured gemstones are USA followed by Hong Kong, Singapore, Thailand, Japan, Switzerland etc. The reasons attributed to the above decline are SARS epidemic in the affected countries and war in Iraq.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) The Government and the Gem & Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC), have taken several steps to increase the export of gem and jewellery from Indra including Jaipur and to enhance

competitiveness in the world markets. Some of these are given below :-

* Ministry of Commerce and Industry have prepared a Medium Term Export Strategy for various sectors including Gem and Jewellery sector;

* Duty concessions on import of coloured gemstones;

* The GJEPC promotes the image of Indian gems and jewellery abroad through advertisements, publicity and participation in international fairs, organising buyer-seller meets and direct approach to market retailers;

* The GJEPC identifies new markets by organising market study through consultants. It also deputes Indian designers to various international trade fairs and exhibitions to study the latest trend in designes;

* The GJEPC promotes export of Hallmark Jewellery from India so that customers abroad can be assured of quality and purity of Indian made Jewellery; and

* Government have provided funds to set up the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Centre of Jewellery Design and Manufacture at Surat to give a fillip to jewellery design and manufacture.

Free trade with Bangladesh

2709. SHRI AIMADUDDIN AHMAD KHAN (DURRU): Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Bangladesh has recently expressed its interest to have free trade with India;

(b) whether it has also urged to have joint ventures with India;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the steps contemplated by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI CHENNAMANENI VIDYASAGAR RAO) : (a) During the 6th Meeting of the India-Bangladesh Joint Economic Commission (JEC) held in Dhaka on July 14-15, 2003, the two sides agreed that the Joint Working Group at the level of Joint Secretaries from the two Ministries